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LETTER DATED 15 FEBRUARY 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon subsequent instructions of my Government, I have the honour to kindly request that the letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Mate Granic, addressed to you, dated 11 February 1994 and submitted to your office on the same date, now be distributed as a document of the Security Council.

A copy of the letter in question is attached for your reference.

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 11 February 1994 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that significant progress was achieved during the talks between Mr. Haris Silajdžić and myself in Geneva on 9 and 10 February 1994.

In our joint statement, both sides agreed to continue and intensify their talks and specifically:

(a) Separately to renew their appeal to the Security Council and request that international control be established along all the borders of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of achieving a peaceful solution;

(b) That the military commanders of the two sides meet within the next seven days in order to work out the remaining details concerning the overall cease-fire;

(c) That negotiations on the unconditional exchange of detainees will be speeded up and that both sides will further cooperate in the search for missing persons;

(d) That deliberations and negotiations about all possible modalities of the future relations between Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats, as well as between the two States, will be continued, taking into consideration the principles and arrangements already agreed upon;

(e) That future political solutions notwithstanding, both sides should secure the return of refugees to their homes following the restoration of peace.

As regards point (a) of the joint statement, the Government of Croatia would like to reiterate its position concerning control of its internationally recognized borders, the borders with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and, in particular, control of its borders with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Republic of Croatia maintains its firm opinion that strict adherence to Security Council resolution 769 (1992) is essential for the implementation of the mandate of the peace-keeping forces in Croatia, as it is for the implementation of resolutions 757 (1992) and 787 (1992) and, in particular, resolution 820 (1993).

Similarly, my Government believes that complete and effective control of all the borders of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is of equal importance and would strengthen the possibility for a peaceful solution to the conflict along the lines of the European Union action plan. In this regard, the implementation of Security Council resolutions 787 (1992), in particular paragraph 16, and 838 (1993) is crucial.

The Republic of Croatia has, on several occasions, specifically in documents S/25766, S/25885 and in particular S/25874, requested that international observers be positioned entirely on its territory in order to monitor the border of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. My Government firmly reiterates that position.

However, fully aware of the considerable financial and personnel strains resulting from the possible use of numerous ground troops, as suggested in the report of the Secretary-General (S/26018 and Add.1), my Government would instead propose the use, with the authorization of the Security Council, of the aerial surveillance and air power of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which could be undertaken by appropriately equipped aircraft of the Member States already implementing Security Council resolution 816 (1993).

Pursuing the full normalization of Muslim-Croat relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the betterment of cooperation between the two neighbouring States, in accordance with the initiative presented by the President of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Franjo Tudjman, in Bonn on 10 January 1994, my Government further proposes that a special team of international inspectors undertake an in-depth inquiry and establish the true facts concerning the alleged presence of foreign elements in various military formations engaged in operations in the territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As a peace-promoting step in cooperation with the Security Council and as a goodwill gesture towards the Sarajevo Government, in the meantime my Government expresses its readiness to withdraw certain units from the border areas with Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the recent Security Council request. But my Government also calls upon the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina immediately to order its army to cease all hostilities and offensive actions against Croatian population centres, especially in the region of central Bosnia. Following the cessation of hostilities, we shall issue an appeal to all Croat volunteers in central Bosnia to lay down their arms and return to their normal civilian lives.

The Republic of Croatia is ready to call off the units of the Croatian Army on the left bank of the Neretva River and elements of the Croatian Army on the right bank of the Neretva. The Republic of Croatia would approach the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and the UNPROFOR Commander in Bosnia and Herzegovina to agree on the monitoring mechanism that would verify strict compliance with the Security Council request. We would propose to the UNPROFOR representatives that withdrawal be completed by 15 February 1994.

Furthermore, as a measure aimed at easing the tensions in the area, the Government of the Republic of Croatia would advise the command of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) to withdraw a part of its heavy weaponry in central Bosnia and to declare a cease-fire in the town of Mostar unilaterally.

My Government hopes that the continuation of constructive negotiations between the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Muslim sides and the implementation of the agreed cease-fire will create conditions conducive to the further easing of

military tensions between the two sides, pending the search for an overall political solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In order to make this appeal truly effective and to contribute further to the return to normalcy in the area, as well as to prevent even greater suffering of the Croatian civilians and the new wave of refugees, my Government demands once again that the Security Council provide firm guarantees for the safety of the four remaining Croatian enclaves in central Bosnia (Vitez, Novi Travnik, Usora and Žepče) subjected to the ongoing offensive of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia reiterates its strong support for the European Union action plan of 22 November 1993. At the same time my Government welcomes the consensus that was finally achieved among European countries, the United States of America and other Members of the United Nations to continue to work along those lines in order to reach a peaceful and comprehensive settlement to the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, it also welcomes the readiness to use NATO forces, if necessary, to end the long suffering of the civilians in the besieged city of Sarajevo.

The Republic of Croatia believes that the Security Council has to continue to play a decisive role in finding a lasting and comprehensive solution to the crisis in accordance with all previous Security Council resolutions.

(Signed) Mate GRANIĆ
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister for Foreign Affairs